

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE

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EXDIS TOSEC 276

FOLLOWING REPEAT OF AMMAN 3877 ACTION SECSTATE INFO CAIRO
DAMASCUS RABAT TELAVIV 03JUL74:

QUOTE: S E C R E T AMMAN 3877

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, JO, SY, MO

SUBJECT: KHADDAM AND BEN SOUDA VISITS

BEGIN SUMMARY

1. I HAVE HAD SEVERAL LONG DISCUSSIONS WITH PRIME
MINISTER OVER LAST WEEK AND WITH "NEWSWEEK" DIPLOMATIC
CORRESPONDENT ARNAUD DE BORCHGRAVE, WHO IS HERE AS PERSONAL
GUEST OF KING AND PRIME MINISTER, ABOUT ABOVE VISITS AND
JORDANIAN VIEW OF PRESENT SITUATION.

2. JORDANIANS BELIEVE THEY HAVE RECEIVED SIGNIFICANT
SUPPORT FROM SYRIANS FOR THEIR PRESENT NEGOTIATING POSTURE.
VISIT INVOLVED SOME ADDITIONAL PLANNING FOR COORDINATION
OF STRATEGY AMONG EGYPT, SYRIA, JORDAN AND POSSIBLY
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THE PLO PRIOR TO SEPTEMBER 3 ARAB SUMMIT IN RABAT.
SYRIANS, ACCORDING TO KHADDAM, ARE PREPARED TO MOVE BACK
FROM NEGOTIATION TO CONFRONTATION WITH ISRAEL IF NEGOTIATING
TRACK IS STALEMATED. ONE POSSIBLE SYRIAN APPROACH WOULD

BE TO BEGIN CONFRONTATION AGAIN WITH REFUSAL TO APPROVE RENEWAL OF UNDOF MANDATE. MOROCCANS HAVE SENT BEN SOUDA TO TRY TO SET UP JORDAN-PLO TALKS TO AVOID CONTROVERSY AT RABAT SUMMIT.

END SUMMARY

3. RIFAI TELLS ME KHADDAM VISIT WENT WELL AND JORDANIANS ARE SATISFIED WITH POSITION WHICH HAS EMERGED. KHADDAM WANTED TO COME EARLIER THAN LAST WEEKEND AND JORDANIANS PUT HIM OFF MORE FOR REASONS OF TACTICS THAN ANYTHING ELSE. KHADDAM VISIT INVOLVED DISCUSSIONS OF SEVERAL FACETS OF MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM, INCLUDING: GENEVA CONFERENCE, NEXT STEPS IN DISENGAGEMENT, INTER-ARAB RELATIONS, FUTURE OF PALESTINIANS, AND STRATEGIC PLANNING AMONG ARABS.

4. ON QUESTION OF GENEVA, RIFAI TELLS ME THAT SYRIANS SEEM TO BE ANXIOUS TO MOVE AHEAD WITH A CONFERENCE WHICH WOULD BE IN THE MAIN DEVOTED TO A DISCUSSION OF BASIC GUIDING PRINCIPLES TO BE AGREED AMONG THE PARTIES. PRINCIPLES WOULD LATER BE IMPLEMENTED IN COMPREHENSIVE NEGOTIATIONS. DE BORCHGRAVE AMPLIFIED THIS FURTHER BY SAYING THAT HE GATHERED FROM RIFAI THAT SYRIANS WOULD LIKE TO HAVE GENEVA BREAK DOWN INTO A SERIES OF PARALLEL WORKING GROUPS TO CARRY ON FURTHER DETAILED NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN VARIOUS PARTIES INVOLVED ON A BILATERAL BASIS. RIFAI NOTED THAT GENEVA COULD NOT PROFITABLY AS A GENERAL CONFERENCE DISCUSS DETAILED QUESTIONS, BUT COULD SERVE TO TRY TO BREAK THROUGH TO A GENERALIZED SOLUTION WHICH WOULD BE IMPLEMENTED BY SOME UNDETERMINED FOLLOW-UP PROCEDURE. ONLY GENERAL PRINCIPLE WHICH RIFAI COULD ARTICULATE FOR CONFERENCE TO AGREE ON WAS THAT OF ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. WHEN I SUGGESTED THERE MIGHT BE OTHERS, HE SAID THAT WAS THE ONLY ONE WHICH HE AND KHADDAM HAD REALLY FOCUSED ON.

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5. RIFAI WAS MOST EXPLICIT IN REPEATING JORDANIAN POSITION THAT THEY WOULD NOT GO TO GENEVA UNTIL SOME DISENGAGEMENT WAS ACHIEVED ON WEST BANK BETWEEN JORDAN AND ISRAEL. HE FELT THAT HE HAD ASSURANCE OF SUPPORT FROM KHADDAM ON THIS POINT. THE JORDANIANS ALSO ASSESS THE EGYPTIANS AS BEING FAVORABLE TO THIS POSITION. RIFAI STATED UNRESERVEDLY THAT SYRIA WOULD NOT ATTEND A RECONVENED GENEVA CONFERENCE UNLESS JORDAN HAD ACHIEVED SOME STEP AT DISENGAGEMENT. BOTH AGREED THAT BEST PROSPECTS OF RETURN OF ARAB TERRITORY LAY ALONG SUCH A PATTERN, THAT WEST BANK WAS NEXT LOGICAL PLACE FOR THIS TO HAPPEN, AND THAT GENEVA SHOULD NOT TAKE PLACE UNTIL POSSIBILITIES FOR RETURN OF TERRITORY EXHAUSTED.

6. IN WORKING OUT BASIC PROPOSALS LEADING UP TO SEPTEMBER 3 ARAB SUMMIT IN MOROCCO, KHADDAM AND RIFAI APPARENTLY AGREED THAT THERE WOULD BE A SERIES OF MEETINGS BETWEEN EGYPT, SYRIA AND JORDAN. RIFAI HOPES TO GET ISMAIL FAHMI TO JORDAN AFTER HE RETURNS FROM MOSCOW WHERE RIFAI EXPECTS FAHMI WILL GO FOR A VISIT SHORTLY. KHADDAM WOULD THEN COME AGAIN TO JORDAN AND THE END RESULT WOULD HOPEFULLY BE A WORKING PAPER ORIENTED TOWARD THE SEPTEMBER 3 SUMMIT. JORDAN WISHES TO ESTABLISH IN THE WORKING PAPER POLICY AGREEMENT AS TO NEXT STEPS IN DISENGAGEMENT NEGOTIATIONS INCLUDING PRIORITY FOR JORDAN. RIFAI SAYS KHADDAM IS WILLING TO DO THIS, BUT ALSO WISHES TO LAY OUT AN ALTERNATIVE PLAN FOR ACTION IN THE EVENT NEGOTIATIONS BECOME DEADLOCKED OR STALEMATED. (THIS WILL BE DISCUSSED IN SUCCEEDING PARAGRAPH). JORDANIANS HAVE ACCEPTED THIS TWO-PRONGED APPROACH FOR ARAB SUMMIT AS A REAL POSSIBILITY TO BE PURSUED. FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETINGS MIGHT BE FOLLOWED BY MINI-SUMMIT BETWEEN THE THREE OR A SERIES OF BILATERALS BRINGING THE HEADS OF STATE TOGETHER. THIS WOULD ALL BE PREPARATORY TO AN ARAB FOREIGN MINISTERS GET-TOGETHER IN LATE AUGUST PRIOR TO A SUMMIT.

7. ONE KEY QUESTION WHICH WAS DISCUSSED WAS RELATIONSHIP OF PALESTINIANS TO THIS PROCESS. SYRIANS ENCOURAGED JORDANIANS TO BECOME ENGAGED IN DISCUSSIONS WITH PALESTINIANS ON BASIS THAT THERE BE NO PRIOR COMMITMENTS ON EITHER SIDE AS A PROCONDITION FOR DISCUSSIONS. KHADDAM,
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ACCORDING TO RIFAI, SAID PRIVATELY SYRIA REGRETTED HAVING SUPPORTED FORMULATIONS DEVELOPED BY ARAB SUMMITS AT ALGIERS AND LAHORE CONFERENCE GIVING PLO RECOGNITION AS REPRESENTATIVES OF PALESTINIANS. KHADDAM TOOK POSITION THAT WAS ALL WATER OVER THE DAM AND THAT SYRIA NOW WOULD SUPPORT JORDANIAN RIGHT TO NEGOTIATE AND DID NOT UNDERSTAND HOW IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO CREATE A REALLY INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATE ON WEST BANK. WHEN I ASKED RIFAI ABOUT SYRIAN SUPPORT FOR UNITED ARAB KINGDOM PLAN, HE SAID KHADDAM HAD NOTED IT WAS A PLAN PRESENTED AT THE WRONG TIME BY JORDAN, BUT NEVERTHELESS IT WAS THE ONLY PLAN HE HAD YET HEARD OF THAT COULD COVER BOTH THE DESIRES OF JORDAN AND PALESTINIANS. KHADDAM STATED FIRM SUPPORT ALSO FOR JORDANIAN PROPOSALS FOR SELF-DETERMINATION IN THE WEST BANK FOLLOWING ITS REVERSION TO JORDAN.

8. EGYPTIAN PARTICIPATION AND REACTION WAS SOMETHING I QUESTIONED RIFAI CLOSELY ON. HIS JUDGEMENT IS THAT IN SPITE OF RABIN'S APPARENT PUBLIC ANTICIPATION OF THE NEXT STEP BEING IN SINAI AND PERHAPS BEING A FINAL SETTLEMENT IN THAT AREA, SADAT WILL NOT MOVE IN THAT DIRECTION AND

WILL SUPPORT JORDAN IN ITS EFFORTS TO GET
DISENGAGEMENT ON WEST BANK. RIFAI SUPPORTS HIS
THESIS BY FACT THAT EGYPT COULD NOT MOVE OUT ALONE LEAVING
WEST BANK AND GOLAN AS POTENTIAL AREAS FOR DISRUPTION
WHICH MIGHT THEN CAUSE A RENEWAL OF ARAB-ISRAELI
CONFLICT FROM WHICH EGYPT COULD CERTAINLY NOT REMAIN
APART. DE BORCHGRAVE, WHO HAS PERHAPS HAD AS MUCH TIME
WITH SADAT AS ANY FOREIGN NEWSMAN, ALSO SAYS IT IS HIS
JUDGEMENT THAT SADAT'S VIEWS ARE ALONG LINES THOSE
SET FORTH ABOVE.

9. KHADDAM REVIVED, AS IS APPARENTLY TRDITIONAL WITH
SYRIANS DURING THEIR VISITS TO JORDAN, THE SYRIAN
PROPOSAL FOR A SYRIAN-JORDAN FEDERATION. KHADDAM ARGUED
THAT AS OPPOSED TO PAST ATTEMPTS TO INTER-ARAB FEDERATION,
SYRIA AND JORDAN, WITH PERHAPS THE WEST BANK, WAS
A "NATURAL" DEVELOPMENT. RIFAI MADE IT CLEAR TO ME THAT JORDAN
WOULD HAVE NOTHING TO DOWITH SUCH A PROPOSAL AND WANTED NO
PART OF A FEDERATION WITH SYRIA.

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10. RIFAI NOTED THAT OVER LAST THREE OR FOUR MONTHS THEY
HAD RECEIVED AN INCREASING NUMBER OF REQUESTS FROM PALESTINAIN
ORGANIZATIONS FOR DISCUSSIONS AND CONTACTS. MOST
RECENTLY, KHADDAM AND ASAD HAD HAD XIS HOURS'
DISCUSSION IN DAMASCUS WITH ARAFAT WHO SOUGHT THE SYRIANS HELP
IN OPENING A DIALOGUE WITH JORDAN. JORDANIANS WERE PLEASED
BY THIS REVERSAL OF ROLES IN ARAB WORLD AND DID
NOT EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY OF INCREASED CONTACTS WITH
PALESTINIANS.

1. IN THIS CONTEXT, AHMED BEN SOUDA, MOROCCAN COURT MINISTER,
HAS ARRIVED IN AMMAN ON A PERSONAL MISSION FROM KING HASSAN.
OBJECTIVE IS ACCORDING TO RIFAI TO ESTABLISH PALESTINIAN-JORDANIAN
DIALOGUE WITH HOPE OF AGREEING ON BASIC PRINCIPLES GOVERNING
THEIR RELATIONSHIP PRIOR TO RABAT SUMMIT. HASSAN IS MOTIVATED
BY HOPE OF AVOIDING ACRIMONIOUS ATTACKS ON HUSSEIN AT
RABAT SUMMIT BY WORKING OUT SOME PLO-JORDANIAN AGREEMENT IN
ADVANCE. ADB AL-MUNIM AL-RIFAI, KING HUSSEIN'S INTERNATIONAL
AFFAIRS ADVISER, WAS IN MOROCCO LAST WEEK TO BEGIN
PROCESS AND BEN SOUDA IS HERE TO FOLLOW-UP. RIFAI
INSISTS THAT NO FINAL DECISION HAS BEEN GIVEN TO BEN
SOUDA AND SHOULD ANY CONTACTS RESULT, JORDANIAN FIRM
POSITION WOULD BE THAT WHICH KING HAS STATED PUBLICLY --
JORDAN WOULD REMAIN RESPONSIBLE FOR NEGOTIATING DIS-
ENGAGEMENT ON WEST BANK AND PALESTINIANS CAN HANDLE
PROBLEMS WHICH ARISE OUTSIDE THAT CONTEXT, SUCH AS
PALESTINIAN "RIGHTS" IN AREAS UNDER CONTROL OF ISRAEL
PRIOR TO 1967 ETC.

12. WHILE RIFAI REMAINS SOMEWHAT SKEPTICAL, HE HAS BEEN
LED BY KHADDAM TO BELIEVE THAT SOME BASIC "PRINCIPLES"

CAN BE AGREED BETWEEN PALESTINIANS AND JORDANIANS WHICH WILL PERMIT SUMMIT TO TAKE PLACE IN CLIMATE INCREASINGLY FAVORABLE TO JORDAN.

13. RIFAI AND KING ARE MORE AND MORE CONCERNED BY LACK OF ANY MOVEMENT ON ISRAELI SIDE. THEY WER SHOWN IN ADVANCE TOUGH RABIN INTERVIEW WITH DE BORCHGRAVE PUBLISHED IN "NEWSWEEK" AND "PARIS HERALD TRIBUNE" JULY 1. I HAVE TALKED WITH RIFAI ABOUT NEED TO AVOID SECRET

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OVERBLOWN JORDANIAN REACTION TO RABIN INTERVIEW WHICH WAS OBVIOUSLY PREPARED WITH ONE EYE ON ISRAELI PUBLIC REACTION AT A TIME WHEN TERRORIST INCIDENTS WERE ON INCREASE AND RABIN GOVERNMENT JUST BEGINNING TO FIND ITS FEET. DE BORCHGRAVE HAS INDICATED THAT HE WAS SHOCKED AT THE DEGREE TO WHICH RABIN'S ANSWERS TO HIS QUESTIONS WERE REWRITTEN AND MADE TOUGHER BY CLOSE CIRCLE AROUND HIM WHICH INCLUDES SUCH NOTORIOUS NIT-PICKERS AS MORDECAI GAZIT. DE BORCHGRAVE'S ASSESSMENT WAS RABIN WAS PRETTY SUMMARILY HANDLED BY THIS GROUP AND WAS ABLE TO DO LITTLE TO RESIST THEIR STRONG INSISTANCE THAT HE CHANGE HIS PREVIOUSLY MORE FORTH-COMING ANSWERS TO SUIT THEIR TOUGHER TASTES.

14. SYRIANS ALSO DEVELOPED SOME THOUGHTS FOR FUTURE ALTERNATIVES (PARA 6 ABOVE) SHOULD NEGOTIATIONS STALEMATE OR FAIL. KEY TO THEIR ALTERNATIVE STRATEGY IS FACT THAT UNDOF MANDATE RUNS OUT IN SIX MONTHS. KHADDAM APPARENTLY TOLD RIFAI THAT NO MORE THAN A THIRD OF THE UNDOF STRENGTH IS IN THE FRONT LINE AREA AT ANY ONE TIME. IF NO NEGOTIATING PROGRESS IS MADE, SYRIA WOULD BE WILLING TO RESIST RENEWAL OF MANADATE REMOVE FORCE, AND THINK ABOUT RETURNING TO ACTIVE USE OF WEAPONS EMPLOYED IN OCTOBER 1973. RIFAI WAS SOMEWHAT GUARDED ABOUT WHETHER THIS WOULD MEAN A RETURN TO A POST-CEASEFIRE WAR OF ATTRITION WITH SHELLING ETC., BUT HE DID INDICATE STRONGLY THAT THE SYRIANS WOULD LOOK AGAIN AT THE OIL WEAPON AS AN ESPECIALLY VALUABLE TOOL. KHADDAM PROPOSAL WAS FOR JOINT SYRIAN-EGYPTIAN-JORDANIAN AGREEMENT ON WHAT THEY WOULD DO SHOULD THE NEGOTIATING STRATEGY NOT PRODUCE ACCORDING TO THEIR EXPECTATIONS. DE BORCHGRAVE TELLS ME HE CONCLUDES FROM MANY HOURS OF DISCUSSION WITH RIFAI, A LARGE PART OF WHICH WAS DEVOTED TO AN OFF-THE-RECORD CONVERSATION ABOUT THE KHADDAM VISIT AND A TALK WITH ASAD, THAT KHADDAM REMAINS DISTRUSTFUL OF THE US ROLE FOR THE FUTURE IN THE AREA, WHILE ASAD IS MUCH MORE READY TO ACCEPT US AT FACE VALUE. HE CONCLUDES ALSO THAT RIFAI HARBORS SERIOUS DOUBTS ABOUT FIRMNESS OF US COMMITMENT TO JORDAN AND TO A PLACE FOR JORDAN IN WEST BANK NEGOTIATIONS --THIS SHOULD BE NO SURPRISE TO READERS; IT HAS BEEN AN EMBASSY JUDGEMENT FOR SOME TIME. DE BORCHGRAVE SAYS KING IS

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PERHAPS MORE CONFIDANT OF US SUPPORT AND CONSTANCY. THIS
TOO ACCORDS WITH EMBASSY JUDGEMENT OF SITUATION.

15. COMMENT: RECOGNIZE THAT ABOVE REPORTING IS A RATHER
DIFFUSE COLLECTION OF FACT AND COMMENT ON MANY FACETS OF
PROBLEM. UNCERTAINTIES IN ALL OF THIS ARE PERHAPS MOST
SIGNIFICANT ASPECT. JORDANIANS APPEAR TO BE CONVINCED
THEY ARE CONTINUING TO RECEIVE INCREASED SUPPORT FROM
THE OTHER ARABS AND PARTICULARLY SYRIA AND EGYPT. PLO
POSITION AS SEEN FROM HERE LOOKS WORSE NOW THAN IT HAS FOR
SOME TIME IN THE PAST WITH A GENERAL SOFTENING, APPARENTLY,
OF EGYPTIAN AND SYRIAN SUPPORT ON THE ONE HAND AND INCREASED
FACTIONAL INFIGHTING ON THE OTHER. JORDANIANS, OR AT LEAST RIFAI,
APPEAR PREPARED TO TALK WITH PLO ALBEIT WITHIN CONFINES OF VERY
RESTRICTED POSITION. KING HAS TOLD ME HE SUPPORTS THIS
GENERAL POSTURE, BUT REMAINS EXTREMELY WARY OF ACHIEVING
VERY MUCH WITH PLO. IN ADDITION, PAST SAD EXPERIENCES
MAKE HIM VERY SKEPTICAL THAT EGYPTIAN AND SYRIAN SUPPORT
AS IT IS NOW CONSTITUTED WILL BE VERY ENDURING. END COMMENT.
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